

‘Alleluia’ by Sofia Gubaidulina as a synaesthetic experiment

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Abstract

© 2015, Ecozone, OAIMDD. All rights reserved. Sofia Gubaidulina is one of the most iconic personalities in modern art, and, as a composer, she has already become a living classic. The multidimensionality of Gubaidulina’s musical thinking reflects the philosophical depth of both the concepts of her compositions and their musical language. The light’s part of Alleluia has many times been the object of research for the leading musicologists specialised in Gubaidulina’s works. However, their research interest has been focused mainly on the rhythmic forms of colours rather than on colour symbolism or the semantics of colour combinations. The existence of the light’s part as an independent component in Alleluia’s music texture can be explained within the framework of postmodern conceptual trends, which imply the presence of an idea that defines the concept, content and form of music. The concept behind Gubaidulina’s Alleluia is the sacrament of the Eucharist, as indicated by the names of some parts of the cycle taken by the composer from the liturgical ritual. The light’s part is considered – to determine if this concept governed the composer’s use of specific colours or if the colour scheme of Alleluia had its own semantics – mainly by analysing the biblical and icon colour symbols along with the doctrine of colour chromatism, V. Kandinsky’s system of dynamic colour coupling and the psychological colour tests of M. Lüscher, M. Pfister and R. Heiss. Gubaidulina uses of pairs of contrasting colours, considered by the authors as opposing earthly (warm) and heavenly (cold) ones, and a detailed analysis of their interaction has shown that colour information clearly correlates with the dramaturgical context of Alleluia that can be defined as catharsis. Gubaidulina’s Alleluia was a forerunner to modern light-and-music shows, in which visual associations enhance the emotional impact of music, and this fact can explain both keen attention to this composition at the time of its writing and unabated interest in it today.

Keywords

Absorption, Anaphora, Colour form, Conceptualism, Epiclesis